

VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



MEDIA RELEASE

BILL AYUB, SHERIFF

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Nature of Incident: Statement From the Sheriff – Charity Event

Date & Time: October 2, 2019 @ 4 p.m.

Unit(s) Responsible: Office of the Sheriff

Narrative:

As the Sheriff of Ventura County, I feel compelled to address my decision to withdraw our participation from the "Blue Bowl" flag football fundraising event that was scheduled to take place this weekend here in Ventura County.

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office has worked with hundreds of organizations, businesses, and individuals over the last year to organize and plan successful fundraisers for the Helus family and all the victims of the Borderline tragedy. To date, every event has been successful, lifelong friendships have been established, and people of all faiths and all political views stood hand-in-hand because the focus was exactly where it needed to be - on the victims and their families. We will continue to support all of our fallen law enforcement brothers and sisters and their families, as well as all of the victims of tragedies our community has experienced.

In regards to the "Blue Bowl," I initially gave my approval for support of the event organized by this out-of-state group. As we drew closer to the actual event, they seemed to become more focused on political agendas, and less and less so on the victims and their families. I felt it was in the best interest of the department, the victims, and our community to not directly participate in the event, which the organizers have since cancelled.

The event organizers have now launched a vicious and calculated social media campaign against the Ventura County Sheriff's Office — and specifically against Commander Tim Hagel, who serves as the Chief of Police for the City of Thousand Oaks, as he has done honorably for the past several years. During the past year, since the Borderline crisis, Commander Hagel has been both professionally and personally involved with all those impacted by the Borderline tragedy. He has personally attended every funeral service and been present at virtually every fundraiser. His focus has been and continues to remain on what is best for those impacted by this tragedy and what is best for Ventura County.

Our focus continues to remain on what is best for the people of Ventura County and those that suffered, during this difficult time.

Given the national spotlight focused on this event, Karen Helus, the widow of Sgt. Ron Helus who was killed at the Borderline, and their son, Jordan, have reached out to us and expressed their disappointment over the negative publicity. Here are statements from Karen and Jordan:

Statement from Karen Helus:

Friends,

As always, thank you for the continued and incredible amount of love shown to me and my family over the last year. I am saddened and disappointed that a charity fundraiser has turned into politically charged national news story. Since the tragic events of last November, I have intentionally avoided relating political causes to the loss of my husband. Unfortunately, the politics surrounding this flag football event turned into a distraction from the cause it was meant to highlight. Since this event has evolved into more about politics and less about our loss, I feel it is important to remind everyone that I have met our President on several occasions and continue to respect and support him due to his unwavering support of my family and all law enforcement. I also want to thank my life long family at the Ventura County Sheriff's Office for standing by me throughout this past year. They have been with me every step of the way from accompanying me to highly publicized charitable fundraisers to getting my nails done and going to lunch.

Thank you,

Karen

Statement from Jordan Helus

Hello All,

As you are probably well aware, I typically do not speak out on issues, but I feel it is important to do so now. With the recent developments of the Ron Helus Blue Bowl I'd like to clarify a few things from my perspective.

1: Tim Hagel and the VCSO pulled out of the event due to mutual agreement based on the growing political agendas surrounding the event. He is not a rogue chief of police and he is in no way any of the negative things some members of the community (the one he continues to love and support) are calling him. Knowing him personally, he is a kind hearted man who does not deserve to be treated in any other fashion as such.

2: The original intent of the event was to honor those lost at Borderline and have fun with the community in a friendly flag football tournament. As the event has grown in notoriety, the agenda of the event seemed to be changing from honoring the fallen, to becoming a political platform to speak and express personal views. The VCSO has no issue with freedom of speech coming from any political affiliation, but the purpose of the event was not to discuss politics on a stage that the deaths of 12 people created.

3: I have not spoken with the organizers of the Ron Helus Blue Bowl, and I do not believe they had done anything wrong in regards to organizing the event and inviting individuals from a variety of political views, beliefs, and mindsets. In fact, I am very thankful and appreciative of their efforts organizing such a large event. Where they went wrong, was taking conversation between them

and the VCSO out of context and try to paint Tim Hagel as the villain. There was no villain. No one was in the wrong. The focus of the event changed and the VCSO no longer wanted to be affiliated with the newly perceived focus of politics. The only wrong done was slander on the part of the organizers.

As you can tell, I have strong opinions on this and I wish that things could just go back to how they were when the event was first presented. Both my mom and I were very excited and enthusiastic about the idea along with the VCSO, but I personally support their decision to withdraw from the event.

That being said, I do not have all the facts and tend to keep a very open mind. My hope is that this was all a huge miscommunication and that the Blue Bowl organizers did not intend for the event to turn into a political stage.

Best,

Jordan

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